

ON A GOVERNMENT TRANSPORT IN '64.

A Crowd of Soldiers Exposed to the Brutalities of a Drunken Ship Captain.

BY F. W. MIXER.

If any one desires to hear of adventures during the civil war based upon facts, "hairbreadth" escapes, or the more interesting details of some of the greater battles, together with the soul-stirring experiences of captured prisoners of war, and a gloomy recital of their subsequent miseries at those popular Summer resorts of '64, viz.: Andersonville, Salisbury, Libby and Belle Isle, let him peruse the columns of the soldiers' friend, the esteemed National Tribune, for in the columns of that paper, told in plain narrative style, we have read very interesting accounts, mostly reminiscent of those blue days, and speaking well for the memories of the authors.

The experiences of the writer of these lines and his comrades on a Government transport bound for New Orleans in '61, were unique, and could have occurred under no other conditions than those that prevailed during the busy and turmoil of that season during a great war. This vessel, the T. A. Scott (named for Tom Scott, President of the Pennsylvania Railroad), left New York for the Crescent City the last of November, having a crew of seven or eight men (about one-half the necessary number), several officers returning to the Department of the Gulf, a large portion of a Maine cavalry regiment returning from veteran furlough, and 30 or more recruits for the 12th Mass. Battery, then stationed at Port Hudson, La. In addition to the above there were several civilians of a nondescript appearance on board, who had a dissipated look, save the Bowers mark and, on board the ship at least, sustained the reputation of being Chevaliers d'Industrie; in other words, confidence men or gamblers.

Starting from a pier near the Battery one cloudy afternoon, we met our first misfortune by running down and nearly striking in twain a small sloop containing two men and a boy, who were rescued with some difficulty by the crew of a tug-boat. This was immediately established as an evil omen by the sailors, and the superstition seemed to affect their conduct during the voyage. Passing the Jersey coast, it soon became apparent that we were on board a queer craft and one whose destinies were uncertain. The returning veterans having recently received a bounty, had already started a little game of "draw," and this coming to the ears of the Steward he and all his gang of satellites hastened to put into operation a system of business that never ceased until the levee at New Orleans was reached, and was designed to secure, honestly or otherwise, every dollar on board belonging to a soldier, and in this he was ably seconded by the above-mentioned "passengers" from New York.

Great neglect in some official quarters was apparent in sending this vessel to sea with no proper provision for the feeding of the men. There appeared to be no non-commissioned officers to act as Commissary-Sergeant, issue rations, see that they were properly cooked in the galley, and it was soon known that the commissary brought on board was entirely inefficient, and before four days had elapsed the men were subsisting principally on poorly-cooked beans. It is unnecessary in this late day to attempt to fix responsibility for such a state of affairs, but they were unequalled on a transport during the war, and it was at once seen by an intelligent man that nothing but the best of luck would save us from disaster. Taking advantage of the empty stomachs of the men, the wretch known as "Cripps, the Steward," paraded the deck daily, selling tickets that entitled the holder to one dinner, price \$3.50, those equivalent for supper being \$1 less. With a large roll of greenbacks in his hand, and an aid to whisky; cost \$10, ginger ale and other soft drinks, \$2 per bottle. Tobacco sold readily to those who had none at enormous rates. It might be asked why this was allowed? But it was a singular fact that inefficiency ruled, and Maj. Davis, a volunteer officer, nominally in command, seemed conspicuous by his absence. Had an officer of the army, of experience and ability, been present, no such state of affairs could have existed and no such a state of affairs could have existed and no such a state of affairs could have existed.

The Captain of the vessel (Fitzpatrick) and his First Officer were soon found to be the most singular combination afloat. During the day the Captain was extremely haughty in his demeanor, expressing contempt for the army, drank heavily, and spent the greater part of his time in his room, where the cabin boy could be frequently seen rubbing down with flannel or renewing the contents of the Captain's bed. At night a complete transformation took place, after the libations reached the desired point, and appearing as dead he would lie down with flannel and with his face to the bows, uttering the men, appealing to their patriotism, imploring them to do their duty on future battlefields like good soldiers, and generally wound up with a long tirade against Lincoln. The program of the Mate was very nearly the same about 9 o'clock, although he displayed less oratorical ability, while being considerably the drunkest of the two. In the morning they had always relapsed to their normal condition, when neither would look at the uniform and seemed to regret the display of Unionism of the previous night. Both continued drinking, the rations doled out grew smaller, and many cases of sickness appeared.

Nearing the region of Cape Hatteras, away off the port bow, hundreds of bales of cotton were seen tossed about by the action of the waves and evidently had been jettisoned by a blockade runner in order to escape from the clutches of some man-of-war. Captain Fitzpatrick, evidently thinking of the high price which this staple had reached in those days, declared his intention of securing some of it, and in spite of the feeble protests of Maj. Davis proceeded to do so.

For five long days the vessel drifted in the trough of the sea for this purpose. As a bale drifted nearer and nearer the Second Mate was detailed to capture it. This man was an excellent sailor, and repeatedly went over the side and down into the sea, a rope under his arms and the grappling hook in hand, and without his aid not a bale could have been recovered. Hooking on to the cotton, he was hauled on board with the assistance of a few soldiers, and every bale was worth several hundred dollars, cotton then being at its top notch price.

Eighteen bales were secured before the Captain consented to proceed, although continually importuned to do so, and he evidently expected to reap a rich harvest from the spoils. Amid the growing discomfort and sickness, continued lack of food bordering on starvation, a constant repetition of the orgies in the Captain's room, and the extortion of the Steward the ship staggered on until half-way down the Florida coast in the neighborhood of Cape Canaveral she was navigated too close to ship and at 10:30 o'clock one night went to the bottom. The Captain made every effort to float her, but, hampered by the small crew, made no headway for several hours, finally appealing to the soldiers to assist in unlading the cargo of railroad iron and hay, carrying it all aft, thereby taking a great weight from her bow. He promised each man that worked a \$5 bill and also a gallon of rum.

Nearly all the soldiers accepted his offer and worked all night, and the vessel finally floated, but the wages of the men failed to materialize, and although the majority



A Bomb Proof.



JAMES H. PERRY, First Colonel.



WILLIAM B. BARTON, Second Colonel.

of them haunted the "Captain's office" until our arrival at Key West to get a settlement, they failed to do so, and I presume that Capt. "F." still owes them the amount. Passing the black walls of Fort Taylor, we reached the wharf at Key West, and during the time we remained at that port some effort was made to call the ship's officers to account for mismanagement and delay, and to accomplish this arrest. This amounted to nothing, and after a delay of four days we sailed into the Gulf headed for New Orleans, which port was not reached for another five days. As we landed on the levee one Sunday morning a voice called for three groans for Fitzpatrick and the First Mate, which were given with unanimous enthusiasm.

Some days later they were both arrested by the United States authorities, secured bail, and while under bond the writer of these lines accidentally met the First Officer on St. Charles street. Inquiring of him in regard to the Captain's whereabouts, he showed great hostility to his chief, saying that every bale of the captured cotton had been sold by the Captain for about \$350 per bale, the proceeds having been appropriated to his own use, he absolutely refusing to share to any extent with the Second Mate, the man who did the work, the First Officer, or the crew.

Among others who were soon tried in this Department by a military commission were these men.

The Mate managed to escape, but Capt. F. was sentenced to two years at hard labor at Fort Jackson, where I have no doubt he found life less pleasant than on board the T. A. Scott.

REUNION AT LANCASTER, PA.

Big Gathering of Veterans Expected by the Officers of the Central Grand Army Association. With Delegations From Many Counties in the Keystone State.

A red letter circular has been issued by the officers of the Central Grand Army Association, detailing arrangements for the Reunion to be held at Lancaster, Pa., Oct. 13. It is announced that a large number of Posts and delegations have promised their presence. They will come from Lancaster and adjoining and other cities. There will be a dedication of the new G. A. R. burial plot, a parade, campfire, excursions, addresses by Gen. Corbin and other army officers, and by eminent orators of the G. A. R. and others. The railroads will give a rate of two cents a mile, with three day's limit, and specially low hotel rates have been arranged for.

Co. F Reunion.

EDITOR NATIONAL TRIBUNE: The Association of Co. F, 53d Pa., held their Reunion at Fern Brook Park, Luzerne Co., Pa., Sept. 10, the 43d anniversary of the company's departure for the front. There were 22 members present, with their families and friends, the number of tin cups, coffee, pork and beans and other camp fare. They met and sat and ate together this once a year. After dinner they have speaking. This year the session was opened with prayer by Rev. M. Nichols, of Wilkes-Barre; recitation by Miss Jeffries; then an address by Hon. Lester W. Palmer, M. C. from the district. The officers elected for the next year are: Miles F. Newberry, President; O. L. Race, Vice-President; O. L. Roushey, Secretary and Treasurer; G. W. Thompson, Assistant Secretary and Treasurer.—O. L. ROUSHEY.

I have used tobacco 40 years. Woman's Sanitarium, Des Moines, Iowa, antitoxin cured me. Write them for free formula, comrades. Josiah Jones, G. A. R.

A short history of a Notable Regiment will appear each week.

A Notable Regiment.

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FORTY-EIGHTH NEW YORK INFANTRY.

BARTON'S BRIGADE—TURNER'S DIVISION—TENTH CORPS.

(1) COL. JAMES H. PERRY, D. D. (Died). (2) COL. WILLIAM B. BARTON; Bvt. Brig.-Gen. (3) COL. WILLIAM B. COAN.

COMPANIES.	KILLED AND DIED OF WOUNDS.			DIED OF DISEASE, ACCIDENTS, IN PRISON, &c.			Total Enrollment.
	Officers.	Men.	Total.	Officers.	Men.	Total.	
Field and Staff.....	2	2	4	1	..	1	19
Company A.....	2	23	25	..	13	13	223
B.....	1	19	20	..	12	12	215
C.....	4	29	33	..	12	12	219
D.....	2	24	26	..	17	17	224
E.....	1	18	19	..	14	14	202
F.....	1	19	20	1	11	12	224
G.....	1	17	18	..	15	15	227
H.....	1	22	23	..	16	16	206
I.....	2	10	12	..	11	11	205
K.....	2	35	37	..	10	10	209
Totals.....	18	218	236	2	131	133	2,173

Wounded in addition to the above, 62 died in Confederate prisons (previously included), 44.

BATTLES.		BATTLES.	
Bluffton, S. C.....	1	Cold Harbor, Va.....	17
Morris Island, S. C.....	8	Petersburg Mine, Va.....	11
Fort Wagner, S. C.....	3	Petersburg Trenches, Va.....	10
Sanderson, Fla.....	1	Deep Bottom, Va.....	6
Olustee, Fla.....	47	Strawberry Plains, Va., August 16, 1864.....	10
On Picket, Fla.....	1	Hatcher's Run, Va.....	2
Chester Heights, Va.....	7	Fort Fisher, N. C.....	4
Drewry's Bluff, Va.....	22	Wilmington, N. C.....	4
Bermuda Hundred, Va.....	1	By Prison Guard.....	1

Present, also, at Fort Pulaski; Tybee Island; Skull Creek; Coosahatchie River; Proctor's Creek; Chaffin's Farm; Darbytown Road; Fair Oaks (1864); Fort Anderson.

NOTES.—Organized and commanded by Rev. James H. Perry, D. D., a Methodist clergyman, who had been educated at West Point, and had distinguished himself in the Mexican War. He commanded the regiment until June 18, 1862, when he died suddenly at Fort Pulaski. The Forty-eighth left Fort Hamilton, N. Y., on September 15, 1861, and after a brief stay in Washington and Annapolis sailed, October 21st, for Fort Monroe, where it joined General W. T. Sherman's Expedition to Hilton Head. Shortly after the fall of Fort Pulaski, the Forty-eighth was assigned to garrison duty in the fort where it remained for one year. At Fort Wagner, in company with Strong's Brigade, the regiment participated in that memorable assault, and succeeded in entering one of the strongest bastions. They held it several hours, but for want of support had to abandon their costly prize after losing 54 killed, 112 wounded, and 76 missing; total, 242. On February 20, 1864, the regiment fought at Olustee, Fla., where it sustained a loss of 47 killed,* 163 wounded, and 34 captured, and then sailed for Virginia, where it joined the Army of the James in the campaign before Richmond and Petersburg. In this campaign it served in the Second Brigade (Barton's), Second Division (Turner's), Tenth Corps. While at Cold Harbor the division was attached, temporarily, to the Eighteenth Corps. At Fort Fisher the regiment was in Pennypacker's (3d) Brigade, Ames's Division. The Forty-eighth lost 859 men, killed and wounded, during the terrible fighting of the last twenty months of its service, — a noble record.

*Including mortally wounded.

NOTE: Any subscriber who was a member of this regiment can have, upon request, a copy of this short history printed on good paper, suitable for framing. There will be no charge for it. Address THE NATIONAL TRIBUNE, Washington, D. C.

Reunion at Newport, Tenn.

EDITOR NATIONAL TRIBUNE: The following has been issued by the local Committee on Arrangements for the G. A. R. Reunion of Tennessee Veterans at Newport, Tenn., Sept. 29.

Ten o'clock, music by brass band; 10:30 separate meetings of all the regiments belonging to the Association, to perfect the line of march at the Court House, and headed by brass band, will march around the three principal business blocks, returning to Court House, where dinner will be served on the lawn, 1 p. m., address of welcome by C. G. Bower, responses by Capt. A. J. Gahagan, Capt. Wm. Hule and M. M. Harris, Judge Newton Hacker and others; 2 to 3 p. m. will be devoted to speeches arranged by the Association. All veterans having flags that were used in the army will please bring them along. Reduced rates have been asked for on all railroads coming into Newport, Tenn. The W. & N. S. trains from west arrive in Newport at 5:15 a. m. and 11:42 a. m., and depart west at 3:32 p. m. Those desiring to participate in the different organizations will have to come on the evening of Sept. 28, or on the 3:15 train in the early morning of Sept. 29.—A. RAGAN, Chairman.

Reunion of 95th Ill.

EDITOR NATIONAL TRIBUNE: The surviving members of the 95th Ill. held their 39th Annual Reunion Sept. 3 at Nunda, McHenry County, Ill. There were 101 members registered. The W. & N. S. train from west arrived in Nunda at 5:15 a. m. and 11:42 a. m., and departed west at 3:32 p. m. Those desiring to participate in the different organizations will have to come on the evening of Sept. 28, or on the 3:15 train in the early morning of Sept. 29.—A. RAGAN, Chairman.

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